Wildlife Damage Review

SPRING
1992

Numero Dos

SPECIAL EDITION

AN URGENT CALL TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE:

YOUR TAX DOLLARS ARE PAYING FOR THIS

Lions Killed By Animal Damage Control In Southeast Arizona

Wildlife Damage Review

P.O. Box 2541
Tucson, AZ 85702
602-882-4218

Wildlife Damage Review **would like to thank PATAGONIA, INC. for their vital support in our first year of action. Their generous kick-off fund and continued support has enabled us to begin moving the mountain.**

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... and our Contributors:

Roger Candee
Rand Carlson
Susan Hagood
Lynn Jacobs
Steve Johnson
Mollie Matteson
Doug Moore
Doug Peacock
David Plowden
Dick Randall
Tom Skeele
Gil Shaw
Jim Stiles
Judy Ward
Cynthia Whitehead
Susan Zakin

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art by anselmo, Kentlin J. Keebler

Wildlife Damage Review Staff
Clarke Abbey
Marian Baker-Gierlach
Lisa Peacock
Nancy Zierenberg

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Fund for Wild Nature
P.O. Box 1683
Corvallis, Oregon 97339
Make the check payable to *Fund for Wild Nature*. Earmark your check for *Wildlife Damage Review*.

BRINGING ADC OUT OF THE CLOSET

In February of 1991 *Wildlife Damage Review* (WDR), came together as friends and citizens concerned about the widespread killing of wildlife on the public lands. Over the previous two years more than three million animals had been poisoned, shot, or caught in snares and leghold traps, all at taxpayers' expense. A federal program called Animal Damage Control (ADC) was responsible for these deaths. While we do not consider ourselves animal rights activists, we were shocked and upset by this program. Not only were animals dying in inhumane ways, but ecosystems were being harmed by the ADC's uneducated attitude toward predators. Today, the ecological role played by predators is well-known. This program is a relic of our national ignorance.

The focus of our campaign comes from the perspective that the earth is in a tenuous state. The continued existence of its life forms, Homo sapiens included, is inextricably linked to the protection of biological diversity. Predators are an integral part of this plant and animal web, and human interference with predator populations disrupts the harmonious workings of the whole.

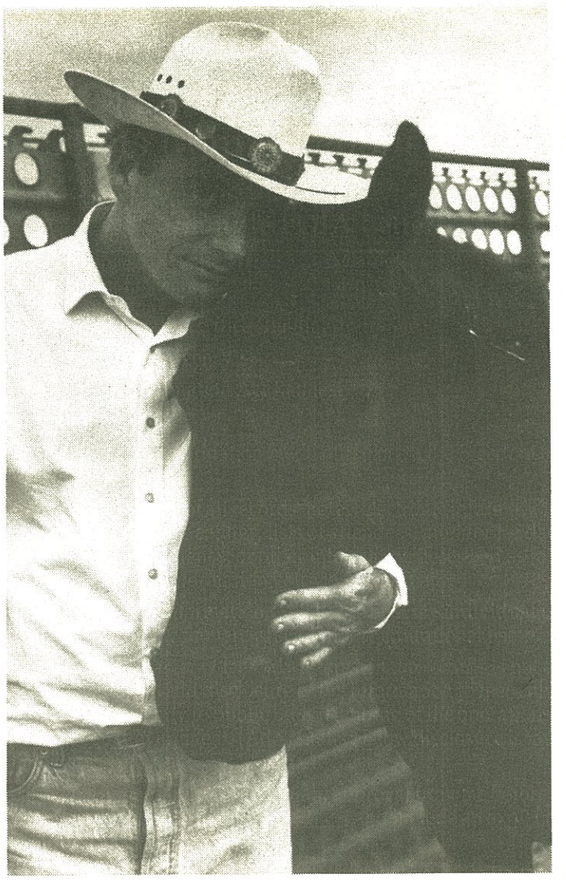
ADC programs, which disrupt this balance, are deplorable. The archaic legislation that mandated federal hunters and trappers to kill with the intent to extirpate any native wildlife that "threatened our dreams of economic expansion and our feelings of dominance" (Fleischner 1990) has resulted in the destruction of millions of years of evolution through the killing and subsequent loss of native species.

Most people – except perhaps those few who are the direct beneficiaries of ADC activities – have a strong negative reaction when they learn about this program. But ADC has a low profile. Few people know that millions of their tax dollars are being used to kill wildlife, such as mountain lions, coyotes, bears, badgers, wolves, fox, prairie dogs, and many bird species.

Wildlife Damage Review's first task is to let the public know about ADC and its activities. In addition, WDR has been challenging environmental assessments. Public agencies must prepare these documents before any action with significant environmental consequences is undertaken. In the case of predator control, these documents are generally a rubber stamp for ADC activities on public lands. We are also working to mobilize citizen activists to write their legislators, asking them to cut ADC appropriations. Finally, WDR is applying for funding to establish a committee that would develop legislation to substantially alter ADC's mission. This committee would consist of wildlife biologists, lawyers, legislators, and people knowledgeable in predator control policy and practice. Committee members will participate in a meeting to design reform legislation which would take into consideration America's changing attitudes toward predatory animals.

These goals will not be easy to attain. We are challenging a strong bureaucracy and powerful economic interests. We are at odds with the current political climate, which favors short-term solutions to long-term problems. Decisions based on political expedience have drastic global consequences.

This makes it even more important for people to get involved. The majority of Americans now acknowledge that all wildlife species have intrinsic value and the right to exist. From our perspective, new legislation is the only long-term solution to ADC. We are committed to achieving it.



Michael Blake & 1202
a 20 year old wild mustang

Photo © Lori Grinker,
Contact Image Press

More and more caring Americans are realizing that the history of the ADC is a history of cold blooded atrocity, perpetrated in the name of our own government.

If the United States is to continue its sponsorship of an agency such as this it must cease staffing it with men who slaughter everything in sight and take pleasure in doing so. Sadism supported with tax dollars can have no place in the future of America.

The life's blood of our democracy is citizen action. I urge all concerned Americans to lend a hand in the restoration of our country.
Join with me and support the *Wildlife Damage Review* in any way you can.

The hour is getting late.

Michael Blake,
author of Dances with Wolves *and*
Airman Mortensen

DEATH MARCH

Total Animals Killed by ADC in 1989 & 1990: 3,283,883

Alligator
11

All *Death March* Drawings © Doug Moore

PREDATOR CONTROL ON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES !?!

Making Refuges Safe for Wildlife

This summer, citizens will have a chance to make the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service live up to its name by commenting on a draft 10-year management plan to the year 2003.

National Wildlife Refuges are managed by the US Fish & Wildlife Service under the Department of Interior. Traditionally, individual managers have been given quite a bit of autonomy in how things were done. There is a handbook which defines national policies and a master plan for each refuge, but no standardized national management plan. The Service is now undergoing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process to re-evaluate management criteria and set national policy concerning the 479 refuges and wetland management districts (91 million acres) in the system. The process is called "Refuges 2003–A Plan for the Future of the National Wildlife Refuge System". This year marks the system's centennial.

A growing number of people feel that under current policies, the word "refuge" is hardly appropriate for the 91 million acres managed by Fish & Wildlife. The priority for all refuge managers is the protection of wildlife, with emphasis on waterfowl and habitat protection. But there are a number of activities which have traditionally been tolerated within refuges, referred to as "secondary uses" by the agency. These include hunting, fishing, use of motorized boats and off-road vehicles (ORVs), water-skiing, private domestic livestock grazing (2,059,051 acres in the lower 48 states), growing of commercial crops, use of pesticides and herbicides, timber harvest, gas/oil/mineral exploration and extraction, military uses for training activities, and predator control.

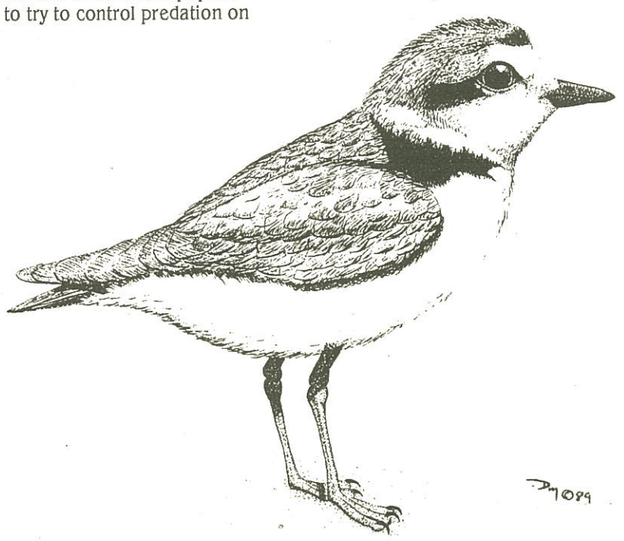
A disturbing number of species which are dependent upon our refuges are being harmed or driven to extinction by many of these uses. Half the refuge managers at a 1990 meeting stated that wildlife was being jeopardized by public, military, or commercial activities at their preserves.

Predator control is authorized on refuges only for the stated purpose of protecting waterfowl and threatened and endangered species. Those individuals who graze their livestock on these lands (a mere 744 permittees using over 2 million acres across the lower 48) surely reap the indirect benefits of this program. According to the agency's Washington DC office, the 1989 figures regarding predator "management" are as follows. Out of 479 management areas, 103 use predator control. Of those, 90 use trapping (although 105 other refuges use trapping for different reasons, such as recreation, or to trap animals other than predators), 60 use shooting and hunting, seven refuges admit to using poisons, and six use other unspecified lethal means of control.

Fortunately, many refuge managers seem to be using non-lethal methods as well. Island construction (to isolate ground nesters) and electric fencing are two of the more popular non-lethal ways to try to control predation on waterfowl.

This current process for establishing refuge management policy is precedent-setting. The range of alternatives seems to cover the spectrum, from intensely managed to a more naturally functioning system. The general public has an opportunity to voice opinions about what should constitute wildlife refuge policy. The draft EIS is expected to be sent out in May 1992. The public will then have 90 days to provide comment on the draft. Now is the time to get involved. Write to USF&WS to get on the mailing list for a copy of the draft.

Refuges 2003 Planning Team
US Department of the Interior
Fish & Wildlife Service
Mail Stop - 670 ARLSQ
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240



Snowy Plover • *Charadrius alexandrinus* Drawing © Douglas W. Moore

PREDATORS HELP COLORADO RANCHER

From the highway, the Lasater Ranch looks the same as any other cattle operation out there on the rolling plains near Matheson, Colorado. Corral, barn, and ranch house are set well back from the road. And yet for all the appearances of conformity, Tom Lasater is about as traditional as a Yankee taco. While most other cowmen are committed remorselessly to a personal war against nature, Lasater leaves nature alone. He regards his 25,000-acre ranch as a protected wildlife area, and posts it as such. Under a rigid self-imposed no-kill policy toward predators and poisonous weeds alike, he eschews the pesticides and herbicides favored by other ranchers, and tolerates no shooting on his land. For the 1,100 head in his herd, there are a few concessions: artificial water holes, and supplemental feed in the winter. But by and large, Tom Lasater lets his cows fend for themselves. "I like to sit back and let nature do the work," he says. "She's a hell of a lot smarter at it than we are."

When Lasater first came to Matheson, he found the ranch overrun with rabbits. "There were just jillions of them everywhere," he says. Lasater left the rabbits alone, though other cowmen warned him he was making a mistake. Soon, he noticed a significant increase in the number of coyotes on the ranch. "I mean there got to be just jillions of them, too," he says. "Well, you can imagine what happened. The coyotes were here because there was plenty to eat, and by-and-by they leveled off that rabbit population. Then most of them moved on, but they sure left behind a neat maintenance crew, just to make sure those rabbits never got out of hand again. Now the rabbits and coyotes are in balance. And they're in balance because we left both alone."

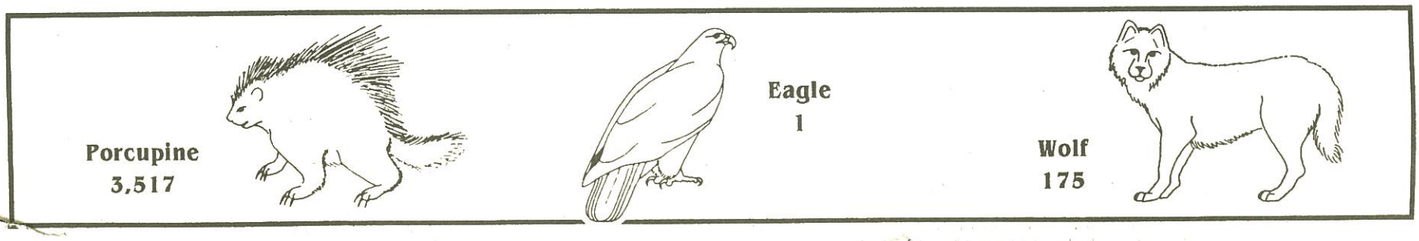
Coyotes set most cowmen's teeth to grinding. Not Lasater's. In all these years of ranching, he says he has lost relatively few calves to coyotes. Says Lasater: "An appreciable percentage of the coyotes' diet is composed of insects, rabbits, rodents, etc. Hence, they are not dependent on beef."

On one occasion, when Lasater was still new in Colorado, he allowed some local officials to dissuade him from his no-kill management policy. There was a substantial prairie-dog town on the ranch. The officials said that was bad, so Lasater baited the area with poison. Later, a foreman new to the ranch asked Lasater why it was that the grass in one particular area was richer and thicker than anywhere else. Lasater looked for himself. It was the site of the prairie-dog town. The extirpated doggies had clearly aerated the root system of the grass that grew over their tunnels. Now, Lasater imports prairie dogs. He is determined to establish them once again as a functional component of the ranch's ecosystem.

As for the grass itself, Lasater lets nature call the shots. No chemical fertilizers are broadcast about in an effort to squeeze from the soil what the soil cannot naturally give. No exotics are brought in. Lasater simply relies on the durability of the native grasses, the blue gramma and western wheatgrass. Over the course of a year, he tries to leave at least half of his rangeland ungrazed, so that the grass has a good chance to recover and to come in strong and well rooted the next time the herd passes through.

Though nature from time to time may be hard on the herd, Lasater can be ruthless. He insists that every cow have a calf in the weaning pen each year, or off she goes to the block. Over the years, he has shown that this results not only in good economics, but sound genetics. He has been quoted as calling it a "survival of the fittest -- where we define fit."

© David Plowden • Reprinted with permission from *Floor of the Sky: The Great Plains*, published by Sierra Club Books



FEDERAL FUNDING

Where Do All Those Millions Come From? YOU.

Activists seeking to improve the Animal Damage Control (ADC) Program will no doubt soon have to deal with the issue of ADC's funding. They will then discover that the process through which funds are allocated to federal programs is confusing, convoluted, and certain to frustrate even those well versed in budgetese.

Before federal funds for any program can be allocated, they must be authorized by Congress.

The appropriations cycle begins in January when the president submits his budget to Congress. At the same time, committees in the House of Representatives send their budget estimates to the Budget Committee. Based on these estimates, the Budget Committee structures the first version of the Congressional budget, which is then voted on and passed as the first concurrent resolution on the budget.

Following passage, the 13 appropriations subcommittees set specific funding levels for the programs and projects under their jurisdiction. Public hearings are held. Based on the concerns and interests of their constituents, members of congress also request funding for specific programs from colleagues on the appropriate sub-committees.

In 1991 the Budget Committee presented its first concurrent budget resolution with a decrease in agricultural spending. The ranching lobby was able to boost the budget back up.

Each appropriation bill is passed by the relevant subcommittee. It is then considered by the full Appropriations Committee. It proceeds to the House floor for debate before it is voted on. House bills then go to the Senate where the process begins once again at the subcommittee level.

Once the full Senate passes an appropriations bill, a House/Senate conference committee made up of selected members of each sub-committee, irons out the differences in the two versions. Then the compromise language is returned to the floor of both chambers for a final vote. At any stage in the process, changes are possible. Finally, the 13 appropriations bills are sent to the President for his signature or veto.

All 13 appropriations bills are supposed to be passed and signed by October 1, the start of each new federal fiscal year. In reality, many are not finished by then, necessitating passage of a continuing resolution which allows a federal agency or department to continue spending funds when its regular appropriation has not been passed in time.

As a part of the US Department of Agriculture, the ADC program falls under the jurisdiction of the Rural Development, Agriculture and Related Agencies Sub-committee of the House Committee on Appropriations, and the Agriculture and Related Agencies Sub-committee of the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

The program survives, and indeed is given more funding every year because of the extremely strong support it enjoys from several key members of the House and Senate, including a number who hold senior positions on the appropriations committees.

To influence key members of Congress, individuals and organizations submit written testimony to the agriculture subcommittee and, if possible, testify in person before the House subcommittee during public hearings. The Senate agricultural subcommittee does not usually schedule public hearings.

Lobbying members (or more likely, their staff) of the agricultural subcommittees is one of the most important ways to influence ADC appropriations. Equally important is generating mail to your representative and senators, provided that letters are thoughtful, reasonably short, and timely. It helps to include a few personal details – how has this issue affected you?

The Humane Society of the United States will be preparing an ADC FY93 (for fiscal year 1993) appropriations package to assist activists in contacting their representatives in Congress. Please write to us beginning in March of 1992; we'll be happy to provide them to anyone willing to wade into the federal budget process.

The Humane Society of the United States
Attn. Susan Hagood • (202) 452-1100
2100 L Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20037

ADDRESSES OF CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES FUNDING ADC

House

Committee on Appropriations
H-218 The Capitol 20515,
202-225-2771 (Frederick Mohrman, Staff Director)

Jurisdiction over legislation to appropriate revenues for the government.

Democrats
Jamie Whitten (Miss.), Chairman; Bill Natcher (Ky.), Neal Smith (Iowa), Sid Yates (Ill.), David Obey (Wisc.), Ed Roybal (Calif.), Louis Stokes (Ohio), Tom Bevil (Ala.), Bill Alexander (Ark.), John Murhta (Pa.), Bob Traxler (Mich.), Joe Early (Mass.), Charlie Wilson (Tex.), Norman Dicks (Wash.),

Matthew McHugh (N.Y.), Bill Lehman (Fla.), Martin Sabo (Minn.), Julian Dixon (Calif.), Vic Fazio (Calif.), Bill Hefner (N.C.), Les AuCoin (Ore.), Bill Gray (Pa.), Bernard Dwyer (N.J.),

Steny Hoyer (Md.), Bob Carr (Mich.), Bob Mrazek (N.Y.), Richard Durbin (Ill.), Ronald Coleman (Texas), Alan Mollohan (W.Va.), Lindsey Thomas (Ga.), Chet Atkins (Mass.), Jim Chapman (Texas), Marcy Kaptur (Ohio), Nancy Pelosi (Calif.), David Price (N.C.), David Skaggs (Colo.), Larry Smith (Fla.)

Republicans
Joe McDade (Pa.), Ranking Member; John Myers (Ind.), Clarence Miller (Ohio), Larry Coughlin (Pa.), Bill Young (Fla.), Ralph Regula (Ohio), Carl Pursell (Mich.), Mickey Edwards (Okla.), Bob Livingston (La.), Bill Green (N.Y.), Jerry Lewis (Calif.), John Porter (Ill.), Harold Rogers (Ky.), Joe Skeen (N.M.), Frank Wolf (Va.), Bill Lowery (Calif.), Vin Weber (Minn.), Ton Delay (Texas), Jim Kolbe (Ariz.), Dean Gallo (N.J.), Barbara Vucanovich (Nev.), Jim Lightfoot (Iowa).

House Subcommittee on Rural Development, Agriculture and Related Agencies

Democrats
Jamie Whitten (Miss.), Chairman; Bob Traxler (Mich.), Matthew McHugh (N.Y.), Bill Natcher (Ky.), Richard Durbin (Ill.),Marcy Kaptur (Ohio), David Price (N.C.), Neal Smith (Iowa), David Obey (Wisc.)

Republicans
Joe Skeen (N.M.), John Myers (Ind.) Vin Weber(Minn.), Barbara Vucanovich (Nev.)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol, also 128 DSOB 20510, 202-224-3471 (James English, Staff Director)

Jurisdiction over legislation to appropriate funds for all government programs; authorizes ricissions of appropriated funds and transfer of surplus allocations; maintains data on congressional appropriating process and government spending.

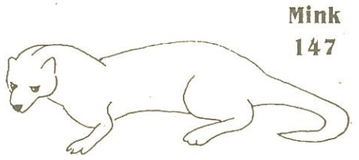
Democrats
Robert Byrd (W.Va.), Chairman; Daniel Inouye (Hawaii), Fritz Hollings (S.C.), J. Bennet Johnson (La.), Quentin Burdick (N.D.), Patrick Leahy (Vt.), Jim Sasser (Tenn.), Dennis DeConcini (Ariz.), Dale Bumpers (Ark.), Frank Lutenberg (N.J.), Tom Harkin (Iowa), Barbara Mikulski (Md.), Harry Reid (Nev.), Brock Adams (Wash.), Wyche Fowler (Ga.), Bob Kerrey (Neb.)

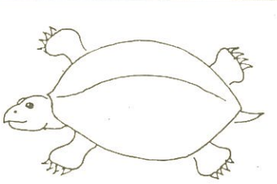
Republicans
Mark Hatfield (Ore.), Ranking Member; Ted Stevens (Alaska), Jake Garn (Utah), Thad Cochran (Miss.), Robert Kasten (Wisc.), Alfonso D'Amato (N.Y.), Warren Rudman (N.H.), Arlen Specter (Pa.), Pete Domenici (N.M.), Chuck Grassley (Iowa), Don Nickels (Okla.), Phil Gramm (Texas)

Senate Subcommitte on Agriculture and Related Agencies

Democrats
Quentin Burdick (N.D.), Chairman; Dale Bumpers (Ark.), Tom Harkin (Iowa), Brock Adams (Wash.), Wyche Fowler (Ga.), Bob Kerrey (Neb.)

Republicans
Thad Cockran (Miss.), Robert Kasten (Wisc.), Arlen Specter (Pa.), Don Nickels (Okla.), Cristopher Bond (Missouri)


Mink
147


Turtle
347

Black Bear
460

COMMENTING ON ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

The scoping phase of an Environmental Assessment (EA) is the phase that involves initial public comment. Here are points or concerns that often need addressing when commenting on these EAs.

1. **Unacceptable Level of Damage:** We ask that if this term is used in the EA, guidelines be established for what constitutes an "unacceptable" level of damage to wildlife, livestock and other resources.
2. **Effectiveness of Control Measures:** We ask that the EA discuss the effectiveness of all types of control measures mentioned in the EA. (For example, lethal control of coyotes causes an increase in their population.)
3. **Economics and Net Public Benefit:** We ask that the EA address the cost effectiveness of predator control programs by analyzing and comparing all costs and benefits related to the proposed action.
4. **EA versus EIS:** An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a much lengthier and thorough document than an EA. We ask that the EA address the issue of whether or not ADC activities will have a significantly low enough impact on the resources and ecosystem so as to warrant only an EA and not an EIS.
5. **Non-Lethal Control:** We request that the EA provide and analyze an alternative which calls for the use of only non-lethal control of predators.
6. **Recreational Activities:** We ask for a thorough discussion of how the proposed ADC activities will affect other uses of the land.
7. **Cumulative Effects:** We ask that the EA address the cumulative effects of ADC activity in conjunction with all other projects occurring on the section of land. (hunting, trapping, logging, road building, mining, and development of recreation sites, for example)
8. **Threatened and Endangered Species:** We ask that the EA be specific in its analysis and guidelines of how, when, and where any type of control will be used with regard to all the threatened and endangered species which may occur on the section of land.
9. **Other Predators:** We ask that the EA address the cumulative effects of ADC lethal control activities (including other lethal control such as hunting and trapping) on each species of predator. We ask that they document predator populations in their area.
10. **M-44's:** We ask that the EA evaluate an alternative that bans the use of M-44's and other toxins.
11. **Specific Dates of Control:** We ask that the EA delineate exactly when these control activities will be allowed in which control zones.
12. **Aerial Hunting:** If this is one of the control methods, we ask that the EA address the biological and aesthetic impacts that the use of helicopters and planes will have on wildlife and humans. We ask that a discussion be included on the idea that preventative control is indiscriminate killing of predators not yet known to be involved in preying on livestock.
13. **ADC Accountability:** We ask to be provided with copies of monitoring reports of ADC activities from previous years.

Photo © Sierra Club Mountain Lion Slide Show

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT – FOIA

Tips on How To Write a FOIA Request, Excerpts from *Freedom Magazine*

To get results, your letter should contain the following information.

1) State clearly that your request is being made under the Freedom of Information Act.

2) Carefully describe in full detail the information that you are seeking. The better you describe the information, the less doubt about what is required to be sent.

3) If a particular time period or date is helpful in describing the information, or if you need information covering a certain time period, make sure the request is inclusive of that.

4) You can request a waiver of fees (for xeroxing), but also clarify a limit to the amount that you are willing to pay for the information *if time is a major consideration*. That way, there will be no doubt about sending the information in a timely fashion if a charge is involved.

5) Include a phone number so that you can be reached if there are questions or information to pass along concerning your FOIA request. Don't forget a return mailing address. If you want to make sure your request reaches the correct office (if you have had trouble in the past dealing with this organization), you may want to send your request via "certified" mail so that someone will have to sign for it. You then receive a return postcard telling you who received it and when it was signed.

6) Make sure your letter is readable. Put on the envelope "Attn: Freedom of Information request".

7) Make a copy of your letter for your files before sending the original. It may come in handy if you are having trouble obtaining the information you asked for.

8) As a general rule, send copies of your originally signed letters to the headquarters, as well as the local office that you are asking for information from.

Sample FOIA Letter

Date

Freedom of Information Office/Public Affairs

Name & Address of Agency

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear

This is a request for information made pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act.

I hereby request copies of all records, notes, electronic information, memos, minutes from meetings, lists of attendees, monitoring data, requests for ADC assistance, or other information described as follows: (specify in detail the information you are seeking)

I am requesting this information for (choose one) my individual use, commercial use, non-commercial scientific or educational use.

I am requesting a waiver of fees. My interest in the records is not a commercial interest, and disclosure of the information to me will contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations and activities of our government. (Add details of how disclosure is in the public interest)

If a waiver is not possible, please obtain approval from me before incurring any expenses in excess of $____ , and include an explanation of why the waiver was denied.

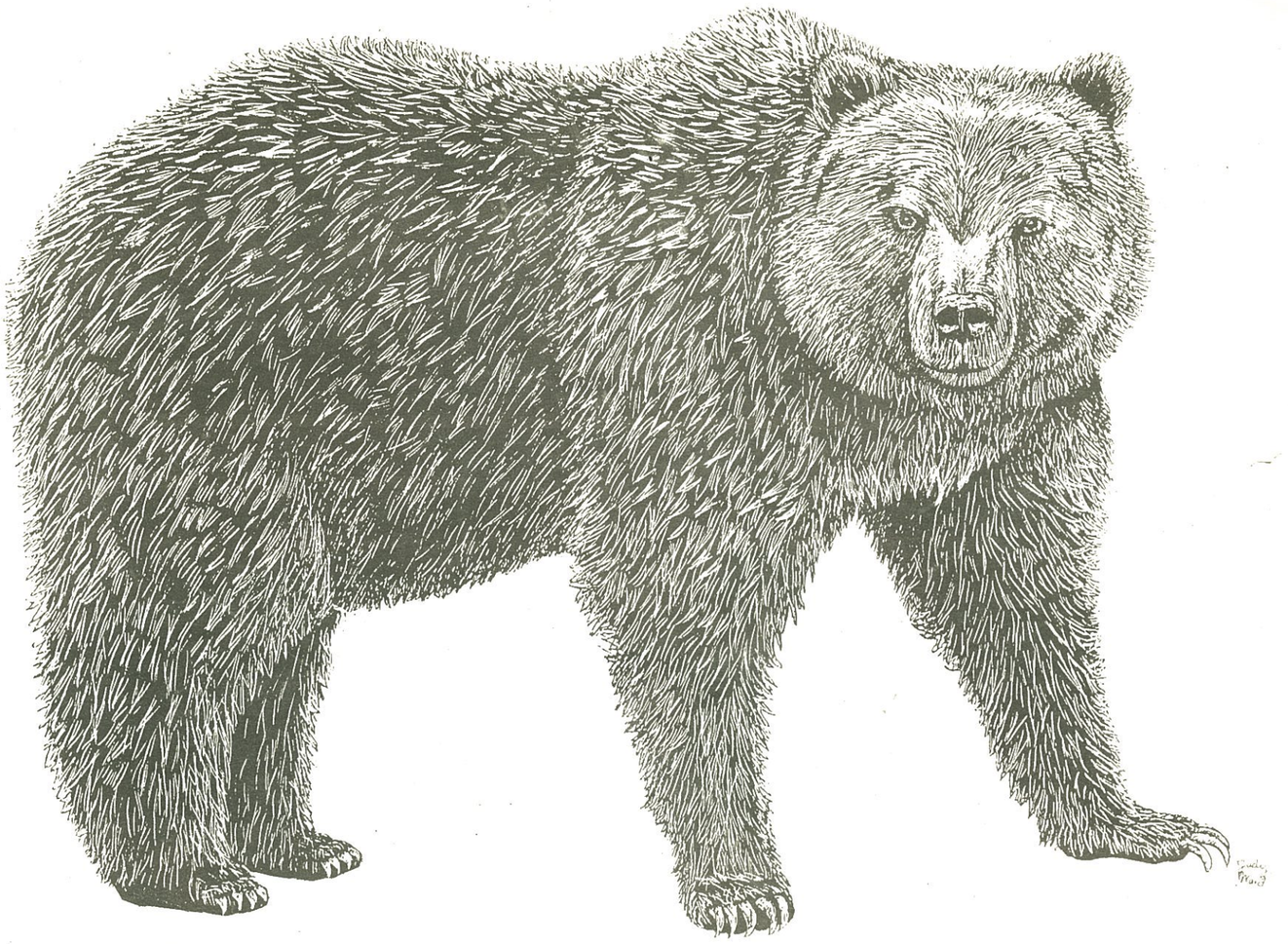
If you have any pamphlets or material which help explain your documents, or the symbols used therein, I would appreciate a copy.

Please respond within 10 working days, as prescribed by law. If for any reason your decision is to deny me any of the requested information, I request a precise explanation for that decision.

Thank you for your assistance.

Your original signature

Your name, address, and daytime phone number



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